(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the announcement by Pakistan on or around September 26, 1993 that Pakistan had halted their nuclear production programme.

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) how far the statement stands to verification if any made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Government have seen Press reports quoting the then Pak Caretaker Prime Minister Mr. Moeen Qurashi as stating that Pakistan had stopped and tapped its nuclear programme.

Subsequently, however, Pakistan Government had clarified that Pakistan's policy on the nuclear issue remains unchanged and that Pakistan will not give up its nuclear capability unilaterally.

(b) and (c) Our concern over the pursuit of a clandestine and weapons-oriented nuclear programme of Pakistan and its implications for India's and regional security and stability have been conveyed to all concerned.

Government constantly monitor all development having a bearing on India's security and take all necessary measures to safeguard it.

PM's Iran Visit

653. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of Prime Minister to Iran he was successful in bringing Irainian Leadership round to India's stand on Kashmir issue;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether any other moves were made during the visit to put India on the centrestage in Central Asia; if so, what are the details thereof indicating the success achieved in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) PM briefed the Iranian leadership on india's position on Kashmir, and apprised it of Pak support to terrorism and subverion in J & K. The Iranian leadership expressed categorical support to India's territorial integrity and affirmed that Kashmir was an internal affair of India's territorial integrity and affirmed situation in J & K would be resolved speedly.

An MOU of Imperation in Surface Transport and Tranisit facilities was concluded during PM's visit. The MOU envisages copperation between India and Iran in the development of the transport and transit infrastructure so as to promote their trade and economic relations with the Central Asian States.

Engaging US Private Firms for Lobbying India's interests in United States

654. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
SHRI P UPENDRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been mooted to engage US Public Relations consultants for lobbying India's interests in the United States:

(b) if so, what is the amount being proposed to be spent as remuneration to the selected Public Relations Firms; and

(c) whether such professsonal competence as required to deal with trade technical and commercial issues with the US, is not available within India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Government have decided in principle to engage a lobbying frim in the US. Some such firms are under consideration. On completion of the process of revaluation, the amount of remuneration to the selected firm would be determined. The